





**The Tampa Bay Healthcare Collaborative** (TBHC) is a membership-based, non-partisan, non-profit organization that promotes and advances the health and wellness of vulnerable populations through community collaborations.

**TBHC** is volunteer driven, and includes health and human service organizations, businesses, healthcare providers and individuals concerned and impacted by the gaps and limitations of the current healthcare system. Our three main focus areas are advocacy, health equity, and wellness.

A wide range of healthcare policy issues impact how **TBHC** members are able to serve their patients and clients, including rising healthcare costs, barriers to accessing care, and fewer resources for organizations that provide charity care. The **TBHC Advocacy Committee** developed the **Healthcare Voter Guide** to raise awareness about these issues and inform **TBHC** members and the general public about each candidate's proposal to address them.

#### LEARN MORE ABOUT TBHC

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Candidates running in the 12 competitive state legislative races in Tampa Bay were asked to participate in the **Healthcare Voter Guide** by responding to a five-question survey.

Participating candidates and their responses are listed in the following pages. The responses from the candidates are printed as we received them. Please read through the entire guide or click on a specific name below to go immediately to that page.

The complete list of candidates in the 12 competitive state legislative races is below. Candidates marked with an asterisk (\*) did not respond to the survey.

More information about each district is available on the Florida House of Representatives and Florida Senate websites.

DISTRI	ICT	DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE	REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE
Senate-1	18	<b>Bob Buesing</b>	Dana Young*
Senate-1	19	Darryl E. Rouson	John Houman
House-5	8	Jose N. Vazquez	Dan Raulerson*
House-5	59	Rena Frazier	Ross Spano*
House-6	50	David B. Singer	Jackie Toledo*
House-6	53	Lisa Montelione	Shawn Harrison*
House-6	55	Bernard "Bernie" Fensterwald	Chris Sprowls*
House-6	56	Lorena Grizzle*	Larry Ahern*
House-6	57	David Vogel	Chris Latvala*
House-6	58	Ben Diamond	Joseph Bensmihen
House-6	59	Jennifer Webb	Kathleen Peters*
House-7	70	Wengay Newton*	Cori Fournier*

## BOB BUESING - D SENATE DISTRICT 18



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

The rising prices of healthcare and therapeutic drugs are symptomatic of focusing on the financial side of the healthcare business. What we know from research is that focusing on quality and outcomes is the best way to reduce the cost of healthcare to individuals. Crafting enforceable policies that deal with the supply and quality of services is an inescapable and important challenge. For example, does every hospital and medical group need the latest multi-million dollar imaging machine, or can we accurately establish the allocation of such high-cost, high-tech devices to meet the needs of our community. With so much taxpayer investment in healthcare, this community has every reason to expect its Legislature to use its financial leverage to negotiate for both price and quality.

Unlike the federal government, Florida can negotiate prices with drug companies. If all public and private payers in Florida combined their purchasing power, drug companies can be convinced to lower prices to a level closer to that of other countries.

Having said that, there is real work ahead in helping people understand how to access the healthcare that's already available. Many people don't know how, when or why to use healthcare services when they are NOT sick. That gap in actionable knowledge causes both huge wasted taxpayer expense and unnecessary suffering and serious illness for citizens who don't have that knowledge. That issue is worthy of thoughtful and effective policy making.

Ploridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

Because mental health and substance abuse take huge human and financial tolls, until recently most public policy and financing viewed them as separate from the general healthcare system. Employers and insurers were not required to offer coverage. However, in the past few years, federal policy has required "parity" in physical and mental health coverage. That is not enough. Mental health screening and services must be fully integrated with routine primary care. We must be willing to assist primary care sites with the initial cost of that integration. Indeed, the Hillsborough County Healthcare Plan is funding that model through its primary care sites, now. Like with any other emerging health problem, recognizing and intervening early is much less costly in both human and financial terms. Furthermore, I would support a thorough review of both workforce needs and licensing laws to determine how well they are meeting the needs of Floridians. Gaps must be addressed through thoughtful legislation.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

The sad truth is that the uninsured are relatively easy to identify, but most folks don't know they are underinsured until they get a bill for services that they thought they bought coverage for. We should consider whether to subsidize healthcare coverage on a sliding scale for everyone so that financial access is not an absolute barrier for anyone.

For the poorest among us, we should take advantage of every Federal public dollar on the table to fully pay for their coverage. Beyond that, we should create a Florida marketplace where individuals and small to medium size businesses can come to negotiate for coverage they want. Public subsidies, (most already available) should be used to help those individuals and businesses with the affordability of coverage. Underinsurance is a product of lack of transparency and consumer misunderstanding of the coverage. Many people focus solely on premium costs because deductibles, co-pays and co-insurance make comparing coverage products unnecessarily complex. More complexity is added when there are different costs for so-called "outof-network" services. The only partial relief in considering coverage is that most plans set caps on out-of-pocket expenses. I would support legislative action to establish more comprehensible transparency standards

for plans, so that being "underinsured" is a conscious decision, not a surprise.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

The truth is that the federal Low Income Pool is not actually expiring. It was fully funded and replaced by the Medicaid expansion option, which Florida foolishly declined. Unfortunately, this major reduction in funding for needed healthcare was a self-inflicted wound. But the federal funds to solve this problem are still available to us. I would not support asking Floridians to pay a second time for services that they have already paid for through federal taxes. We Florida taxpayers have to tell our paid state elected officials that they have the opportunity to make a better choice with our tax dollars, and they should immediately take the opportunity. That's the message that I will take to Tallahassee.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

In my view, the state's policy concerns in the healthcare sector should be assuring access and quality. The state should not be intervening in the private medical decisions made between a woman and her doctor. Consequently, I would encourage legislative colleagues to view women's access to preventive and reproductive healthcare as part of its role in assuring access and quality. As a lawyer, I would encourage them to understand that controversies regarding conflicts in law, business, medicine, etc. belong in the judicial branch of government where they receive objective, balanced examination. It is also vital that we overturn the recently passed law that would defund some women's healthcare clinics in the state.





# DARRYL E. ROUSON - D SENATE DISTRICT 19



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

I would support legislation that allows the insurance industry to incent better patient compliance with their physicians for overall wellness, preventive care and lifestyle changes as well as adhering to tratment regimes. I think we need to edicate our patients and my constituents that it is in their best interest to become full participants in their treatment and overall health.

Floridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

My own personal history of addiction, treatment and recovery will make me strongest advocate for mental health and addiction in the Florida Senate. I will sponsor legislation and fight to move more drug cases from criminal court to drug court. Here we can pursue treatment options rather than just incarcerate. I will expand the use of halfway homes and other community based treatment for addiction. For mental health I will pursue options that take mentally ill patients out of the county jails and move them to community based hospitals where they can receive real tratment rather than just temporary incarceration.

How will you improve access **2** to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

I fully support the Senate expansion of Medicaid that was proposed two years ago by Sen Negron. We should take advantage of federal dollars to help fund our local health care needs. We must also increase education through our county health departments about healthy lifestyle choices.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

I would support extension of the Low Income Pool. If we cannot negotiate an extension with the Federal Government, I would support the Senate version or even more aggresive form of Medicaid Expansion. Medicaid expansion would cover most of the costs that are now born by the LIP and shortfalls could be made up with additional state appropriations.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

I support full funding of Planned Parenthood and other similar providers. I support no restrictions on what a doctor or health care provider can discuss with their patient.







# JOHN HOUMAN - R SENATE DISTRICT 19



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

I believe in preventive maintenance, treating the patient before he is sick. Educating a patient to live a healthy lifestyle.

Floridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

I believe in mental health and

substance abuse programs. This is an issue I would have to fight out on the Senate floor.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

This is a problem, all I can say is it would be one of my top priorities in the Senate.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

Renew the low income pool.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

Being a Republican, this will sound strange. I've always supported Planned Parenthood and programs similar to that that help low income families.

Healthcare is an uphill battle, with big money and armies of lobbyist on both sides. I could care less about them and more on what is good for the patient.







## **JOSE N. VAZQUEZ - D** HOUSE DISTRICT 58



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

As your State Representative I will support state request for Federal action to support contracting with drug companies for the purchase of medications in all Federal programs.

Floridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

As your State Representative I will support increased state funding for community mental health services for early intervention and treatment.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

As your State Representative I will support the expansion of Medicaid as envisioned under the Affordable Care Act.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health

centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

As your State Representative I will support the expansion of Medicaid as envisioned under the Affordable Care Act and thus avoid the correct restrictions on the low income pool.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

As your State Representative I will maintain state support of Planned Parenthood and County Public Health Department Prenatal and Well Child service and primary health care programs.







## RENA FRAZIER - D HOUSE DISTRICT 59



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

My prior service on the Board of Trustees of Brandon Regional Hospital as a community representative gave me a unique perspective on the health care issues facing our community and state. All Floridians need access to quality healthcare as a matter of well being for our families, communities, businesses and economy. We have over 800,000 Floridians who do not have access to quality health care, many of whom are forced to use the emergency room as their primary care.

By expanding Medicaid, we have an opportunity to reduce health care costs, ensure equal access to affordable care, and help to alleviate the monetary burden of taxpayers who are supplementing the costs of hospital use by the uninsured. In the Florida Legislature, I will be an advocate for the expansion of Medicaid.

Floridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

I support including mental health

and substance abuse as criteria in health care coverage and support community initiatives that work to provide affordable access to mental health and substance abuse treatment. The refusal to expand Medicaid intensifies the barriers to affordable, quality care for low-income community members and families. Our state has overwhelming numbers of Floridians who are dealing with mental health and substance abuse issues that can be alleviated by reallocating dollars for treatment and prevention instead of the billions of dollars we spend on corrections.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

I support the expansion of Medicaid, which will improve access to affordable and high quality healthcare. Additionally, I will continue to work to increase awareness and education about the existing programs that aim to help provide healthcare services for those most vulnerable in our community. I am involved with the University Area Community Development Corporation, which is an organization that works to improve the economic, education, and social levels for residents that live at or below the poverty line. I have learned that many times, our community members are not aware of, and thus do not use, all of the existing programs and resources that are available. For example, the KidCare insurance program and the free healthcare services provided by the Outreach Clinic, a

nonprofit organization funded by community contributions and grants.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically bene-**T**fited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

Unfortunately, our state opted to not expand Medicaid and programs like the Low Income Pool have been temporary solutions to a long-term issue. The expansion of Medicaid will allow for comprehensive and consistent care. I will be a continued advocate for Medicaid expansion in the Florida Legislature.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

As a mom of four daughters, I have been a lifelong advocate for women's rights. I believe that a woman's health decision should be determined by her and her doctor. I will continue to be a voice for women's preventative and reproductive health services in our state.





## DAVID B. SINGER - D HOUSE DISTRICT 60



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

The Governor of Florida and other state leaders vehemently opposed the Affordable Care Act, and it has had dire consequences on health care costs in our state. Florida will miss out on \$66 billion in federal funding over ten years if it continues to reject Medicaid expansion under the ACA. People continue to sign up for Medicaid - just this year we saw a 6.6 percent increase from last year – and by not having proper funding, we put unnecessary strain on our healthcare system.

Ploridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

We need to recognize addiction and mental health issues should have parity with other areas of focus when it comes to healthcare policy. This includes funding, access to care, and regulation of quality. This population has long been neglected and ignoring addiction and mental health issues not only hurts our healthcare system, but also adds a costly burden on our justice system. I'm pleased to see the State of Florida has passed legislation that would connect health professionals, the justice system and local charities to establish preventative measures that address problems in addiction

and mental health that also save taxpayer money. This is a right step when so many states across the country are slashing mental health funding. We also need to raise awareness of these issues in our communities. They should not be dark secrets that people keep, but rather recognized as health problems that can be addressed. Here in Hillsborough County, I serve on the Advisory Board at DAACO for just these reasons and purpose.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

We have to expand Medicaid through Florida Health Insurance Exchange. Our tax dollars are paying for expansion in other states and we are failing to get any return on our tax dollars. I also intend to work closely with our federal representatives to use information gathered from the Affordable Care Act regulations to inform our policies in Florida on how best to encourage higher quality yet more efficient medical care.

There are many findings from the Medicare Shared Savings Program experiments that are helping health-care providers align their incentives with high quality patient care and efficient spending and members of the Legislature should embrace this new information, not reject it due for partisan reasons.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

I am a supporter of the Senate proposal that would solve the funding gap created by the expiration of the LIP in 2017: the Florida Health Insurance Exchange Program (FHIX). This proposal is a bipartisan solution that would provide affordable and quality health care services for millions of Floridians and lay out a sound plan to restore LIP funding.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

We need to elect more pro-choice candidates to the Florida Legislature, and I am one of them. According to the Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, more than 30 bills have been introduced in the Florida Legislature attempting to restrict a woman's ability to make her own medical decisions in the last three years. It is vital to have elected officials that understand the importance of preventative and reproductive health services for women and to stand up against restrictive bills that are introduced.





## LISA MONTELIONE - D HOUSE DISTRICT 63



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

As a volunteer board member of two health facilities, I know how important it is to have access to medical and mental health care. The citizens of Florida deserve to have access to quality, affordable health care regardless of socioeconomic status or pre-existing conditions.

It makes fiscal sense for Florida to expand Medicaid and accept federal funding. Currently, Florida is letting millions of dollars in federal funds go elsewhere, rather than accepting the funds to expand Medicaid. This expansion will enable more people to obtain health insurance. In Tallahassee, I will support the expansion of Medicaid for Floridians who do not make enough money to qualify under our state's current program.

I will be a leading voice in the fight for mental health parity. We must fully fund programs to assist our state mental hospitals, our safety net facilities, out patient services and outreach to those who are not recieving the mental health care services they so desperately need.

Ploridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

If we were able to properly fund the treatment of individuals with mental health problems, I believe that we would be able to prevent many of the ills our society is currently facing. Florida ranks 49th in the country for state funding of basic mental health services. Nearly 4 million adults and 2 million children need mental health services in our state and we are ignoring their needs. This is shameful. At a time when our economy is recovering, the reimbursement rates for our safety net facilities have not changed in 20 years. The refusal to accept Federal dollars for health care exacerbates the problem. Millions of our citizens are suffering needlessly, not only those with mental illness, but those who live with them who have to bear the brunt of this hardship.

It is also shameful that the Miami-Dade correctional system is the largest provider of mental health services in the state. Untreated mental health like domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, mass shootings, suicides, poor performance at work or at school, homelessness, even if you just look at the issue from an economic standpoint, it is costing our state much more to deal with the ramifications of not fully funding the treatment of those who need help. Entry points should be at every level of service, so there is "no wrong door". Case workers in our schools, affordable housing or homeless services, etc should have the ability to refer clients to mental healthcare services.

## How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

I support the expansion of Medicaid, ensuring that the taxes Floridians pay are spent on healthcare here at home and not sent to other states. Florida has failed to take full advantage of the many benefits that the ACA has afforded doctors, hospitals and patients in other states. This is especially important in this district where so many healthcare facilities are located and where many underemployed individuals live. Many do not have health care through their employer so I believe the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would be most impactful in District 63. It is also helpful in building a strong economy; people who have proper health care are sick less, put less strain on our emergency rooms and are more productive at work or at school, or in the care of themselves and their families.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

We can not continue to take a bandaid approach to this issue, we need a comprehensive answer to ensure that we have adequate funding to provide a consistent level of care, improve access, and to ensure that our hospitals are being reimbursed for their uncompensated care costs. This program is ending and we cannot turn our backs on uninsured Floridians, many the poorest of the poor. In the short term maybe we could revisit the presumed flawed model used by the Federal Government to arrive at the LIP funds allocated to Florida in previous years. If we could prove we were due more than the \$608 million that may provide funds long enough to provide the safety net a bit longer while we work to have the expansion of Medicaid in Florida.

This coming hole in Florida's budget is a purely self-inflicted wound. The Low Income Pool was never meant to be a permanent solution to solving the funding crisis affecting hospitals due to uncompensated care. Florida has a solution and it's very simple: expanding Medicaid. The federal government has made it clear that the expansion of Medicaid should make up for the money that was a part of the Low Income Pool in the past. Although Florida has managed to stave off disaster for our public hospitals the last two years through negotiating a longer period for the drawdown of these funds and by backfilling money from general revenue, this is not a sustainable longterm solution. I will continue to fight for the expansion of Medicaid to ensure our hospitals have the funding they need to continue providing quality care to Floridians in need.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

Access to reproductive healthcare is every woman's right. The decision to terminate a pregnancy should be one made by a women, her doctors and her family - not by their state representative. I will be a strong voice defending the rights of women to make their own reproductive health care decisions. The courts have already overturned portions of the most onerous bills passed in the previous session. I would work to reverse what legislation remains that cuts funding to community health centers and Planned Parenthood.





### BERNARD "BERNIE" FENSTERWALD - D HOUSE DISTRICT 65



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

### To offset the rising cost of healthcare, I would:

- Promote more transparency of healthcare costs to consumers so that they know upfront what the care will cost.
- Replace the "fee for service" method by which healthcare insurers reimburse healthcare providers with a "outcome based" method. This will create a financial incentive to provide services that work.
- Although a "two edge sword", requiring healthcare consumers to have some "skin in the game". i.e. deductibles, co-pays, help consumers choose services wisely.
- Provide incentives to healthcare insurers to enter more markets to create more competition.
- Require that HHS negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers to reduce the cost of drugs used by Medicare and Medicaid patients, plus more use of generic drugs.

The Affordable Care Act was a good first step in expanding access to health-care to all Americans. However, we are now seeing double digit increases in premiums sought by private insurers, plus private insurers are leaving health-care exchanges. I feel that, in the long run, we will eventually have to create more competition in the marketplace or move to what Bernie Sanders called "Medicare for Everyone".

Ploridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective

treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

The lack of resources to tackle substance abuse and mental health challenges is a national problem for which Florida is not immune. Too often, suffering individuals often end up in the criminal justice system, where effective treatment is lacking. Families are damaged. Children end up in foster care. In short, more resources need to be provided.

In the 1980's, I served on the Fairfax County (VA) Community Correction Resources Board that diverted non-violent felons from jail into our treatment program. Most clients had a history of substance abuse and treatment was a common component. We had a markedly reduced recidivism rate. I saw, first hand, the value of treatment, as opposed to incarceration.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality health care for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

Having roughly one million Floridians without affordable healthcare is a public crisis. Therefore, Medicaid expansion is a must.

As a father with an adult child who has consistently worked, but who has periodically gone without healthcare coverage (food service employee) I understand the anxiety that persons without coverage go through. As either an alternative or as a supplement to this expansion, I would expand the availability of healthcare through public clinics.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care

costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

My opponent, Chris Sprowls, publicly stated in 2014 that poor Floridians would be better off without health insurance than with Medicaid. His position is entirely wrong! He has repeatedly opposed Medicaid expansion.

The Florida legislature and Governor Scott need to reverse course, approve Medicaid expansion and reauthorize funding for the working poor who are struggling to provide healthcare for themselves and their families. We need to put more, not less, money into this.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

I firmly believe that women have the ultimate power to make decisions about what to do with their bodies, particularly in the realm of reproductive health. The Legislature needs to stop passing needless and unconstitutional barriers, such as unnecessary waiting times and ill informed requirements upon clinics.

I support former President Clinton who once famously said that abortion should remain "safe, legal and rare". I think most Floridians agree with that standard. Unfortunately, there is a full throated minority that feel that it is OK to impose their standards on others.





## DAVID VOGEL - D HOUSE DISTRICT 67



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

Florida must exercise its authority to its protect residents from excess profiteering by companies that are charged with the responsibility of ensuring the delivery of health care. Stated differently, Florida must deem health care to be a vital public utility, and then must legislate/regulate accordingly.

The Affordable Care Act requires everyone buy health insurance (or pay a penalty), yet imposes no requirement upon private insurers to ensure that high-quality (i.e. low-deductible, comprehensive) health insurance is truly affordable. Adding both insult and injury to this clear imbalance is the fact that private insurers have a habit of not paying legitimate claims that are in fact covered by their contracts (I am speaking from personal experience). The result is that despite the fact that the government literally has handed millions of new customers to the insurance industry, the law makes no demand that the industry treat people with either decorum or respect. For example, in 2015, Florida Blue: (i) made a profit of \$471,000,000 from its federally-subsidized insurance plans, and; (ii) paid its CEO over \$5,000,000. Meanwhile, for 2017, Florida Blue plans to raise its premiums by as much as 16% over what it is charging in 2016.

Ploridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

While it seems cliché, it is true that the

largest mental health entity in Florida is the state's prison system; to some extent, this is because of warped priorities in Tallahassee, and to some extent it is because Florida's system of criminal justice does not focus correctly upon the "big picture" with respect to what constitutes an offense for which prosecution is beneficial to society (in other words, Florida must stop effectively criminalizing both substance abuse and problems with mental health). The result is that there is a clear imbalance in the resources that are devoted to mental health care versus those that are directed towards the prisons. An evaluation of how much money could reasonably be shifted from the penal system to mental health care would go a long way towards allocating resources correctly without sacrificing any of the purposes of either system.

Beyond that, better education is the foundation to a stable society.... and it is no different with respect to issues of mental health and substance abuse.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality health care for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

Florida must replace the Low Income Pool ("LIP") program with the expansion of Medicaid that is being offered by the federal government.

Replacing the LIP program by accepting the expansion of Medicaid would result in more total dollars being made available each year for the delivery of health care for uninsured and underinsured Floridians, and also would result in no increase in the amount of money that Florida must spend annually for the provision of health care services to this population (this will be true even after Florida begins contributing 10% to the annual funding pursuant to the expansion of Medicaid); meanwhile, accepting the expansion of Medicaid would benefit: (i) the approximately 800,000 residents of this State who need this vital program;

(ii) the health-care-providers who go unpaid under the LIP program, and; (iii) the economy of Florida because when health-care-providers get paid for their work, they spend the money in this State.

As far as I can tell, accepting the expansion of Medicaid benefits Florida, and has no downside.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

My response to this question is the same as my answer to question #3.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

I always have believed that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution imposes a prohibition against legislating in this area; those who think otherwise have proven beyond reasonable doubt that they have little (if any) respect for the substance and meaning of the Constitution.

Because Florida's legislature still is dominated by those to whom I referred in the last paragraph, the only thing I really could do in Tallahassee would be to work to educate the electorate to understand that such laws have no place in our system, and thus try to help elect more candidates who actually understand the principle of separation of church and state.





## BEN DIAMOND - D HOUSE DISTRICT 68



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

First, we need to expand Medicaid in Florida. If Florida accepts the tax dollars that we've already paid into the system, costs would decrease not only for those who currently don't have healthcare coverage, but for the rest of us who end up footing the bill for their emergency care. I also think that Medicare should be allowed to negotiate the price of prescriptions with pharmaceutical companies on behalf of those in that program. As a general note, I think we need to focus more on preventative care and make these programs available to more people.

Floridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

Mental health and substance abuse treatment is a major issue throughout Florida and in my district. We need to increase funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment to provide more programs for those in need. Florida's spending on mental health ranks 49th in the nation, and that's unacceptable. We also need to make the system easier to access for people who are in need of care.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

I would recommend that we expand Medicaid in Florida to provide access to quality care for those without health insurance and those with inadequate coverage. I'm frustrated that Tallahassee has turned this into an ideological battleground, when accepting the tax dollars we've already paid into the system would help thousands of people in this district. We need to study the other states with Republican-controlled Legislatures who have expanded Medicaid to understand how we may better approach this issue politically in Florida.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

Given that the Low Income Pool is expiring, it is all the more reasons for Florida to expand the Medicaid program to provide needed coverage and funding for care. However, because of political opposition in the Florida House leadership to expanding Medicaid, I think we need

to look for alternative solutions to ensure our hospitals, health centers, and other facilities have the funding they need. If general revenue funding is not an option, we need to look at how other states are addressing this problem. I understand that Texas has a model where they are funding a pool by trying to incentivize collaboration with other health care providers. I'd like to learn more about how other states are approaching this issue, and also would like to know if the Tampa Bay Health Care Collaborative believes that going back to CMS to renegotiate this issue is an option for Florida. One thing is for sure: we should not wait until June of 2017 to address this problem. We need to be working on real solutions now.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

I will be a strong advocate for women's access to preventative and reproductive health services in Florida. Every year, the Legislature tries to find another avenue to interfere with women's health-care. That's not right. I will be vigilantly looking out for these bills to oppose them, and will rely on my allies in the healthcare field and who advocate for women's right and access to reproductive services to help me. Additionally, as a State Representative, I will always advocate for continued funding of clinics like Planned Parenthood.



## JOSEPH BENSMIHEN - R HOUSE DISTRICT 68



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

I would work with the pharmaceutical companies to address why they are not competing on the open market. The same needs to happen with health insurance companies. Competition will drive down prices.

Floridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

The problem with substance abuse and mental health issues is that they are not regulated

by AHCA. Having these issues regulated by AHCA would not increase costs insurance companies or patients. Once these health issues are placed under AHCA we can work on ensuring that health care plans for each patient are covered by health insurance and/or other health payment plans.

How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?

Uninsured and underinsured patients will have improved access to health care once physician reimbursement is improved and streamlined. Many practitioners do not accept Medicaid or HMO insurance because of reduced reimbursements with long lag times.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompen-

sated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

There will have to be a partnership between hospital foundations and the State of Florida.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

I will ensure that women are allowed to continue to use their OB/GYN as their primary physician. We will continue to keep barriers away from women's health.





## JENNIFER WEBB - D HOUSE DISTRICT 69



What policies would you propose to reduce the cost of healthcare and help your constituents afford to comply with the procedures, plans and prescriptions recommended by their health care providers?

There are multiple policy initiatives that I believe will help reduce the cost of healthcare:

- Reduce the actual cost of services through full transparency: review the costs of services across networks and providers and identify the variabilities and why they are occurring. Health Florida has been successful in pushing forward similar measures.
- Use the free market to drive down prices through competitive bidding on non-physician services such as medical devices, diagnostic services, lab testing, and other similar products.
- Simplify the coverage plans to diminish administrative costs.
- Remove areas of unnecessary care: examples including routine tests that are not necessary/required for diagnosis, prescribing antibiotics early on for cases of sinusitis, ECGs for patients without risk factors, imaging tests for initial back pain, and others identified by the industry.
- Extend availability of decision aids that educate patients on the condi-

tion, possible medical and nonmedical treatments and outcomes.

• Provide insurance packages that bundle care services rather than the fee-for-service plans.

Floridians who suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues face significant challenge in accessing effective treatment. Please provide specific policy solutions you would support to remove barriers to care for those dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues.

Too many people dealing with addiction and/or mental health issues are going untreated. I propose the following solutions to remove barriers to care:

• Strengthen existing community partnerships and forge new ones: our county mental health services are centralized into a handful of locations and are greatly overburdened. However, nonprofit and for profit entities already exist in our community that can and do provide additional support and services to our residents. These partnerships with entities, like our local Boley Center, allow us to offer more than mere drugs and therapy; community organizations are able to also help with job placement, housing and support services. Additionally, partnering with these groups decentralizes the provision of services from

a few offices to many, making them accessible to a larger population.

- Health care needs to be expanded to include evidence-based treatments jointly through counseling, medication, and supportive services.
- Expand the MHPAEA to include Medicaid, Medicare and small employer plans: accessibility to mental health and substance abuse coverage should be no more restrictive than access to other services under all health care plans.
- How will you improve access to affordable, high quality healthcare for your uninsured and underinsured constituents?
- · Accepting much needed federal Medicaid expansion dollars: We have approximately 800,000 uninsured Floridians who could be helped by these dollars. The monies have already been paid by our residents through taxation, and they deserve the care afforded by them. By denying these funds, insurance rates increase and the standard of care is diminished for all. Also, the majority of the federal dollars received go to labor costs. That labor force spends those monies in our community, spurring our economy through the "multiplier effect" and, in turn, decreasing the number of people in need of aid.

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## JENNIFER WEBB - D HOUSE DISTRICT 69



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- Establishing more realistic guidelines for payment rates within target groups: rates cannot be overburden some on families or individuals. We need to determine rates that are affordable through comprehensive analysis of existing structures. Those falling within the Medicaid gap need coverage options they can afford.
- Awarding companies that have a proven record of providing high quality care at low prices through tax incentives and preferred status.

The Florida Medicaid program has historically benefited from the Low Income Pool to help offset hospital uncompensated care costs and improve access to public health services. Given the Low Income Pool expires at the end of June 2017, how will you assure that the hospitals, community health centers, county health departments and other facilities that have historically provided the vast majority of charity across Florida have adequate funding to continue providing care at current or higher levels?

Ultimately, the Low Income Pool is expiring because of the availability of Medicaid expansion dollars. Unfortunately, Florida

has not accepted this alternative source of funding which would aid in the much needed charity care afforded by the LIP. Losing the LIP could result in a loss of 15,000 Florida jobs and an additional loss of \$8 billion of personal income for Floridians (according to a report by Florida Legal Services). The primary solution to ensure that this care continue to be provided is by accepting the federal Medicaid expansion dollars. Additionally, I suggest:

- Continuing the use of intergovernmental transfers (IGTs) to fund portions of charity care that might be lost by the defunding.
- Working closely with our Congress people to extend LIP for states that have not yet chosen to accept expansion dollars.

How do you propose to ensure continued access to women's preventative and reproductive health services in Florida?

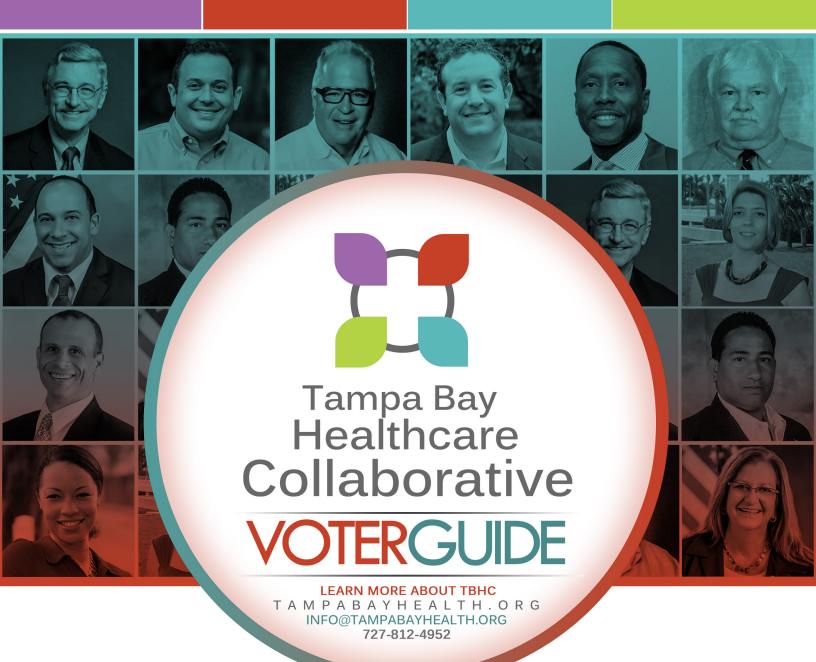
Preventative and reproductive health services are integral to women and our community. I believe protection (and expansion) of those services is ensured through:

• NOT defunding any Planned Parenthood services: more than 350,000 Florida women fall into the coverage gap. Planned Parenthood is an affordable, quality option for preventative care, health screenings and other reproductive services. Without their services, these women and many more will be limited in their access to health care. Identification of cervical cancer through Pap smears has decreased the mortality rate by over 60% compared to before the test was provided (NIH). Now 75% of diagnosed women survive a diagnosis (NIH). Many women only have access to these types of preventative measures because of Planned Parenthood.

- Providing comprehensive sex education and health education to all students: information is power. Additionally, females need to understand from a young age that their physical health is not a taboo subject. Age-appropriate education needs to be provided from the time that children first become aware of their bodies and gender. This knowledge decreases the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, helps to prevent sexual abuse, and diminishes teenage pregnancies.
- Working with the community through public service announcements and events that start and continue a dialogue on the importance of women's health care and the impacts of ignoring it.







**Tampa Bay Healthcare Collaborative** (TBHC), sincerely thanks the members of the TBHC Advocacy Committee who contributed to the development of the **Healthcare Voter Guide**. More information about the TBHC Advocacy Committee is available at tampabayhealth.org/advocacy.

Finally, we would like to thank the candidates who responded to the survey and agreed to participate in the **Healthcare Voter Guide**. Public service is a noble calling, and we sincerely appreciate their willingness to lead our community in a positive direction.